

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A method for displaying option information comprising:
 displaying a workspace on a computer screen;
 displaying at least one icon;
 presenting a non-modal dialog box within the workspace when a predetermined icon is chosen;
 providing a preference option that operates to hide or shrink the non-modal dialog box when a cursor moves off a frame of the dialog box; and
 providing at least one means for restoring the non-modal dialog box.
 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the means for restoring includes at least one hot-spot on the screen.
 3. The method of claim 2, wherein a hot-spot includes at least one of the icon and a preference option box.
 4. The method of claim 2, wherein at least one hot-spot may be re-located by a user to anywhere on the workspace.
 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the means for restoring includes a key combination on a keyboard.
 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the cursor is centered on the restored dialog box.
 7. The method of claim 5, wherein repeating the key combination hides the dialog box.
 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing a means to activate and to deactivate the preference option.

2 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing a means for customizing the
3 preference option.

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5 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the means for customizing is a preference option
6 properties dialog that includes at least one customizable feature choice.

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8 11. The method of claim 10, wherein the customizable feature includes at least one of a
9 choice between a large and a small preference option icon, an automatic positioning option
10 for tool settings dialog boxes, a new tool delay time, and a hide dialog delay time.

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12 12. A computer program residing on a computer-readable medium, comprising
13 instructions for causing a computer to:

14 display a workspace on a computer screen, the workspace having at least one toolbar
15 including a plurality of icons that each represents a tool;

16 display a non-modal dialog box when an icon is chosen;

17 hide or shrink the non-modal dialog box when a preferences option is enabled and a
18 cursor is moved outside the boundaries of the non-modal dialog box; and

19 restore the non-modal dialog box when a restore action occurs.
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13. The program of claim 12 further including instructions to permit a user to disable and
enable the preference option.

14. The program of claim 12 wherein the restore action comprises moving the cursor over
a predetermined hot-spot on the workspace.

15. The program of claim 14 wherein the hot-spot includes at least one of a tool icon and
a preference option icon.

16. The program of claim 14 wherein at least one hot-spot can be moved to a location
anywhere on the workspace.

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17. The program of claim 12 wherein the restore action is entry of a key combination.
 18. The program of claim 17 wherein the cursor is centered on the restored dialog box.
 19. The program of claim 17 wherein repeating the key combination hide or shrink the dialog box.
 20. The program of claim 12, further comprising instructions enabling a user to customize the preference option.
 21. The program of claim 20, wherein a preference option properties dialog box including at least one customizable feature is provided.
 22. The program of claim 21, wherein the customizable features include at least one of a choice of a large or small preference option box, a choice of automatically positioning a tool settings dialog, a new tool delay time, and a hide dialog delay time.